

ARGUMENT AGAINST MEASURE H

Lodi has historically provided quality services to its citizens: vibrant senior and children's recreation programs, green parks, visual and performing arts venues, outstanding police and fire departments with quick response times and good-tasting safe drinking water. These services make Lodi livable and lovable. The 'Water Rate Reduction Initiative' threatens these services.

Although Lodi's water is currently safe, there are chemicals in the groundwater that will soon poison it if not cleaned up. The State mandated the City begin clean-up immediately at the City's expense. Ignoring the order would subject the City to fines and additional legal costs.

It is estimated clean-up of the groundwater contamination, which has now begun, will cost approximately \$45 million. After numerous public hearings to receive input from the citizens of Lodi, the City determined the best funding source was phasing in three \$3.50 a month water rate increases over a one and a half year period. Rates will revert back after clean-up.

Without the water rate increase, which the 'Water Rate Reduction Initiative' seeks to eliminate, funding for clean-up will have to come from a reduction in City services. Services have already been reduced to minimum levels, including a reduction of **54** staff positions. Additional cuts would have to come from reduced levels of service in police, fire, public works, parks and recreation or the library.

Rate increases are never welcomed, but groundwater contamination clean-up is mandatory to protect our water supply for future generations. Safeguard Lodi's quality drinking water and quality of life. Vote "No" on the "Water Rate Reduction Initiative."

Submitted by:

- /s/ Susan Hitchcock, Mayor, City of Lodi
- /s/ Pat Patrick, President & CEO
Lodi Chamber of Commerce
- /s/ Kenneth Mullen MD, Board Member,
Lodi Unified School District
- /s/ Joe Harrington, President & CEO
Lodi Memorial Hospital